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## How to use the School Years Developmental Journal

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#### How to cite:

Oates, John and Mengoni, Silvana (2013). How to use the School Years Developmental Journal. National Children's Bureau.

For guidance on citations see [FAQs](#).

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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/merged-school-years-developmental-journal.pdf>

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# Early Support

for children, young people and families

## How to Use the School Years Developmental Journal



## About Early Support and the School Years Developmental Journal

**Early Support** is a way of working that aims to improve the delivery of services for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities and their families. It enables services to coordinate their activity better and provide families with a single point of contact and continuity through key working. Early Support ensures that service delivery is child, young person and family centered and focuses on enabling practitioners to work in partnership with children, young people and their families.

The **School Years Developmental Journal** has been produced to help families find out more about development and to track change and progress over time. It helps everyone involved with a child or young person to share what they know and discuss how best to work together to support development and learning.

The **School Years Developmental Journal** can be used in combination with other **Early Support** materials. It has been designed to follow on from the **Early Years Developmental Journal**, but can also be used separately. To find out more about **Early Support**, visit <http://www.ncb.org.uk/early-support>

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## Introduction

The School Years Developmental Journal is to help you record and celebrate your child or young person's learning and development and to share what you know with other people.

The Journal includes behaviours that most typically developing children and young people show during their time at school and beyond, i.e. from when they are approximately five years of age to 18 years old and above. The term 'behaviours' is used to refer to the ways in which children and young people may act, the things they do and the way in which they learn.

There are four Areas of Development: personal, social and emotional, communication, physical and thinking. Each of these areas is also organised into sub-areas. The Journal is sequenced into five Developmental Steps. Most children and young people, with or without a special educational need or disability, will pass through these Steps in order, but they may at times be further ahead in one Area of Development compared to other Areas. Progress through the Steps will vary depending on your child or young person's particular disability or needs.

The Journal helps you notice and celebrate everything that your child or young person learns to do, as time goes by. The material is particularly useful if you know or suspect that your child or young person is unlikely to progress in the same way or at the same rate as other children and young people – whether or not a particular factor or learning difficulty has been identified and given a name. When families find out that their child or young people may need extra support and help, they often say they don't know what to expect. They're not sure how their child or young person's progress will be affected, and what they can do to help. The Journal can help you see

how your child or young person is progressing and understand the patterns of development that practitioners (e.g. doctors, speech and language therapists, school teachers, occupational therapists) are looking for. This makes it easier for everyone to work together.

The Journal focuses on what children and young people can do, rather than can't do, and builds a positive record of achievement over time. This is more important than the age at which the Steps occur. However, it can also help you pick up on any changes to the way your child or young person is progressing that might indicate more, or a different kind of, help is needed.

To summarise, the Journal is a flexible resource that can help in many different ways when it's clear that it may be useful to look in detail at how your child or young person is learning and changing.



## Quick Start Guide

If you are starting to use the School Years Developmental Journal after reaching Step 14 of the Early Years Developmental Journal, then begin at Step S1.

If you have not used the Early Years Developmental Journal with your child or young person, then you can use the Key Indicators chart to help you find out where to start. Take a look at the chart and find the Step that best represents your child or young person's current developmental level and use this as a starting point. You may need to use different Steps for the different Areas of Development. It may be worth bearing in mind that the Steps in this Journal correspond to Key Stages 1-5 of the National Curriculum.

Read the Summaries of Development for the chosen Step to get an overall view of that period in development, to find out more information and to get ideas about activities that may support development.

Take a look at the items. When your child or young person is showing one of these behaviours, note down the date you noticed this emerging, developing or when it was achieved. Use the 'notes' space to jot down any examples of this ability or other important things you want to remember.

When your child or young person has completed most items in an Area of Development in a Step, you can date this on the Developmental Profile and then move onto the next Step.

If you are a practitioner using the Journal in a school context, we suggest you turn to Appendix 1, which is a short guide about using the Journal in schools.

Please do send us your views using the feedback sheet at the end of this booklet.



## What is it for?

The [School Years Developmental Journal](#) helps you track and understand your child or young person's learning and development, and share information with other people, including any practitioners working with you. It helps you to:

- record and celebrate change and new achievements
- understand the significance of what your child or young person is doing now, what they are likely to do next and how they can be helped to move on
- build up a record of the nature and sequence of development that can be shared with other people
- recognise the value of all new learning – particularly when it may seem that very little is happening.

In particular, the Journal can be used as a shared basis for discussion at times of transition, for example when your child or young person moves to a new school or class. It can also be helpful when you meet new people for the first time and wish to discuss with them how to include your child or young person and to encourage learning and participation in a particular setting, such as their school class.

If your child or young person requires extra help in the form of a structured individual plan, using the Journal jointly with practitioners will make it easier to agree next steps or goals. It will also help to identify when new learning has taken place or new skills have been acquired.

Where many different people or services are in contact with you, the Journal can also provide a single, shared resource that helps everyone to communicate better, using the same language and approach. It can also improve everyone's understanding of the developmental processes involved.



## Finding your way around the Journal

### Areas of Development

The [School Years Developmental Journal](#) describes typical patterns of development under four Areas of Development and their subareas:

#### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

This Area of Development focuses on how children and young people learn who they are, what feelings they have, how they behave, how their relationships develop, how they develop skills for independent living and how they understand society and other people.

Personal, social and emotional is divided into:

- relationships
- emotions
- views, values and identity
- well-being
- independence
- equality, diversity and cohesion

### Communication

Children and young people develop in their ability to understand others and to express themselves using spoken language or other means. Communication also includes subtle verbal cues such as intonation and nonverbal cues such as people's facial expressions and the setting.

Communication is divided into:

- listening, understanding and reasoning
- sentence building
- speech sounds
- vocabulary
- storytelling and narrative
- social interaction

### Physical

This aspect of development focuses on how children and young people develop their ability to move their bodies, hands, feet and fingers, and use their senses, movement and tools to carry out tasks, explore the world and express themselves. It also includes self-care skills like eating, dressing and personal hygiene.

Physical is divided into:

- fine motor skills
- moving in the environment
- moving creatively
- self-care



### Thinking

Thinking processes are essential for learning and development. All the time, we are storing information in our memory, processing it and making sense of it. Children and young people's understanding of the world is greatly helped by lots of experiences and discussion about things that are going on around them. Thinking also involves children and young people learning how best to approach tasks.

Thinking is divided into:

- memory
- executive functioning
- creativity
- knowledge of the world and problem-solving
- use of technology

While it's useful to chart progress under these Areas of Development and their subareas, in real life, development in one area influences how a child or young person learns everything else, so it's best to think about progress across all four areas. For example, when a young person is joining in a team sport, they're using their communication skills and understanding of relationships to work with their team-mates, as well as using their physical skills.

### Overview

There is further information about the Areas of Development and their subareas at the beginning of the School Years Developmental Journal.

The 'how this applies to us' boxes are there as a space for you to note down any thoughts you may have about how the information may relate to your child or young person – for example, if your child or young person has specific physical needs, then you may want to note down things to consider regarding 'moving in the environment' in the Physical section. These boxes are there for you to personalise the Journal to your family so you could use them in whatever way is best for you.

### Developmental Steps

The Journal outlines a series of five Developmental Steps. These Steps correspond to Key Stages 1-5. The Steps are numbered S1-S5 and continue from the Early Years Developmental Journal, which contains Steps 1-14. In Steps S1, S2 and S3, the term **child** is used and in Steps S4 and S5, the term **young person** is used.

Each Developmental Step covers a relatively broad period of development. This is because development varies greatly from individual to individual due to a wide range of factors including life experiences and the child or young person's interests.

Each Developmental Step is presented as a series of items from each of the four Areas of Development. These can be filled in when you notice your child or young person doing something – particularly something you haven't seen them do before.



## Summaries of Development

Each Developmental Step is introduced by a short summary of what's going on for children and young people at that point of development, and some ideas about activities you or your child or young person could try. The summaries are organised under the same four headings of the Areas of Development described above.

There are also the 'how this applies to us' boxes in the Summaries of Development sections for you to note down any thoughts about how the description of development at each Step may relate to your child or young person.

Developmental Step	Key stage	School year group	Child/young person's age
S1	1	1-2	5-7 years
S2	2	3-6	7-11 years
S3	3	7-9	11-14 years
S4	4	10-11	14-16 years
S5	5	12-13	16-18 years

### Key Indicators

At each Developmental Step, and in each Area of Development, two **Key Indicators** has been chosen. These items have been selected because they are particularly important in development and they are shown in bold in the Journal. There is also a separate Key Indicator table, which may be useful when you start to use the Journal.

In some instances your child or young person's unique profile of strengths and needs may mean that it is not possible for them to achieve a specific Key Indicator. Where this is the case we suggest that you speak to a practitioner who knows your child or young person well, to define what they can do that is close to the achievement summed up in the Key Indicator and then note this down in the Step.



## Using the Journal

### Recording progress using the Developmental Steps

For each item listed for a Step, there are three columns that can be used to record the things that you see your child or young person doing:

#### Emerging – Seen for the first time

Tick and date this column the first time you notice your child or young person doing something that demonstrates a skill or behaviour, even if it's only an attempt.

#### Developing – Seen sometimes

Tick and date this column when you notice your child or young person using a skill or behaviour more often or as they become more skilful at it.

#### Achieved – Seen often

Tick and date this column when you see your child or young person doing something often and with confidence in a number of different situations – for example, in different settings, in different activities or with different people.

You don't have to use all three columns, all of the time. For example, you may only notice a new behaviour or skill when your child or young person is using it quite a lot so you may describe it immediately as 'developing' or 'achieved', rather than 'emerging'. You may also prefer to have a colour-coding system, rather than writing dates in, for example using a green highlighter for one term, a yellow highlighter for the next term.



There are different ways in which you may know that a certain skill is emerging, developing or achieved. You may see it yourself or a practitioner who works closely with your child may tell you about it – for example, their teacher. It may also be helpful to involve your child or young person when completing the Journal as they may be able to tell you more about what they can do and how they do it. For some of the items, it will be helpful to discuss with your child or young person about strategies or techniques they use when completing certain tasks.


As each child or young person makes their own developmental journey, you may find that sometimes they begin to do something that's one or even two Steps ahead of the other things that they can do. So it's worth looking through later Steps from time to time, to get an idea of what next Steps might be or what may be emerging next. Remember that some skills take longer for children and young people to master than others and so there may be a considerable time between them emerging and being achieved.

Remember that it's not so important what your child or young people can or can't do when you begin to use the Journal. The material is not a test or just a checklist. It comes to life as you use and discuss it with other people over a period of time. The idea is gradually to build up a picture of how your child or young person is changing and developing over months and years – a picture that helps everyone notice and enjoy the new things they learn to do, and think how best to support them.

A sample chart is included overleaf on page 13, to give you an idea of what the charts might look like once you begin to use them.

## Personal, social and emotional

Developmental Journal • Step S2

	Notes			
	Emerging Seen for the first time	Developing Seen sometimes	Achieved Seen often	
<b>Relationships</b> <i>continued</i>				
Understands why friends fall out and can think of ways in which they, or others, might resolve their difficulties	✓ Oct 2012	✓ July 2013		<p>Sept 2012 so pleased to hear that Charlie is much better at coping when a best friend chooses someone else to work with</p> <p>August 2013 proud of Charlie, he helped Cindy get her toy back when a child she didn't know grabbed it at our summer party</p> <p>July 2013 Phew! At last I feel I can leave Charlie with his friends for a few minutes while they are playing</p>
Shows resilience (can cope and 'bounce back') when faced with personal difficulties in relationships	✓ July 2012	✓ Sept 2013		
Shows helpful and caring behaviour when faced with bullying – for example, buddies vulnerable children outside immediate friendship group	✓ Aug 2013			
Works or plays together with other children with little adult supervision		✓ May 2013	✓ July 2013	
Organises group activities or games				
<b>Recognises the worth of others - for example, by making positive comments about siblings, friends or classmates, showing appreciation for a kind deed</b>	✓ April 2013			

### Notes

The column on the right of the charts is for you to add comments, if you want.

You might describe what you've seen your child or young person doing, which shows they're developing a behaviour or skill described on the chart – particularly if you see a number of different things that seem relevant. It's helpful to write down particular examples of the things your child or young person says or does. It's nice to have a record, and also these are things that practitioners may ask you about when you talk about your child or young person with them. You also might want to note down any questions you have about what you've seen. This is also a good place to write something about any activities that seem to promote things you're encouraging your child or young person to do.

Some families like to fill out the charts by themselves and then discuss them with other people. Others prefer to talk about everything first and then fill the charts in with the help of people who are working with them or ask someone else to do the paperwork. The Journal can be used in many different ways and you can use it in whatever way you find useful.

### Using the Developmental Profile – getting an overview

There's a Developmental Profile at the front of the Journal to help you see the pattern of your child or young person's progress as time goes by and as they move through the Developmental Steps. It allows you to summarise what's going on, after you've filled out the more detailed charts, and gives you a 'bird's eye' view.



Once you have ticked 'achieved' for most of the items for a subarea in an Area of Development in a particular Step, enter the date in the corresponding box on the Developmental Profile sheet. The Profile summarises and celebrates progress over time. It helps you to see at a glance the areas in which your child or young person learns more easily. It also shows you the things that are more difficult and with which your child or young person needs more help. For example, you may find that your child or young person has moved on to Step S3 in Physical but is still at Step S1 in Communication. Some people like to review events every so often, using a different colour to shade in the boxes each time, as well as ticking and dating entries.

As noted previously, some children and young people may not be able to show a specific Key Indicator behaviour, but may be able to do things that are equivalent - for example, by communicating in a different way. If this is the case, simply note the achievement as an alternative to the Key Indicator. If there is a particular reason why a specific Key Indicator is not relevant for your child or young person, it is fine to show a Step as 'completed' once the other items have mostly been achieved.

Some practitioners that you meet may find the Developmental Profile useful, as it gives a quick, at-a-glance summary of everything that's going on that can be used by anyone who's trying to help your child or young person. You can take the whole Journal or simply the Profile with you to appointments as well as showing it to practitioners when they come into your home.

### Special achievements and things to celebrate

At the end of each Step, there's a blank page for you to add information you'd like to record and remember. This space can be used to make the record more personal and to include things that aren't covered in the Developmental Steps. You could add photos, or record your child or young person's likes, dislikes and interests – for example, favourite food and toys, the activities they enjoy, the TV programmes or songs they like, things of cultural importance to your family, the places they enjoy going, what makes them laugh and so on. Add more pages if you want to put in more about your child or young person and their life. It makes the material more attractive and can be good to look back on later.

The design for the rest of the Journal has been kept deliberately plain to allow you to personalise it in any way you want. This may be something you'd like to do together with your child or young person. There's plenty of space for you to make it as colourful as you like or you can leave it as it is.

The richer the description of your child or young person, the more chance there is to tailor what people do to try to help learning, participation and enjoyment. So, using this section isn't only about making the Journal more fun – it's about sharing as complete a picture of your child or young person as possible with other people.

### Questions you may want to ask

The Journal provides you with lots of opportunities to record new behaviours and skills in a positive way. However, things often aren't straightforward. Children and young people can develop 'difficult behaviour'. At other times, it can seem like nothing's happening for a very long time. Some children or young people may behave in 'different' rather than 'difficult' ways – for example, wanting to repeat the same activity for longer than is usual for other children. Parents tell us that they often forget to ask the questions they mean to



at clinics or when people visit. It's important to discuss these things if they are becoming issues for you or if they simply puzzle you– this page is just to encourage you to note down any questions you have, so you don't forget to ask them the next time you meet with someone you can talk to about it. This is an important space in the Journal, because children and young people tend to move forward more quickly if help and support can be given as soon as you notice things that are beginning to concern you.

### Do it your way

There are many different ways of using the Journal – so use it in whatever way you find most helpful. Some people may have been using the Early Years Developmental Journal from the early days of their child's life; others may pick up the School Years Developmental Journal and begin to use it much later.

Families also like to use the material in different ways – some write a lot, others very little. Some families don't want to write anything at all, but find it helpful to use the Developmental Steps for reference when they're discussing what their child or young person is able to do with other people – and may then ask other people to fill in the Steps for them.

There are no hard and fast rules, except that the material comes alive and is most useful when it's discussed with other people. In general, it's more important to share the information the Journal provides with other people than to fill out all the boxes (however you decide that you want to do that). It helps everyone involved with your child or young person work as a team and talk with you about how best to support them. It also helps you to really understand your child or young person's learning and development and what their next steps might be.

### How to get started

If you have been using the Early Years Developmental Journal and have reached Step 14, then you can just start using the School Years Developmental Journal at Step S1.

If you are new to the Developmental Journals, we suggest looking at the Key Indicator table and thinking about which items your child or young person can do in each Area of Development. This should help you find what seems like a good starting point. It might also be helpful to read the Summary of Development sections for the Steps.

It may be helpful to look at the table (see page 9) that maps the Developmental Steps to the corresponding Key Stages, school year groups and the age of children/young people. It is important to bear in mind that this information is based on 'typical' development.

You may find that your child or young person is developing skills that fall across several different Developmental Steps at the same time – for example, at any given time a child may be developing skills in the Physical section of Step S4, some skills in the Communication section of Step S2 and a few other things described in Step S3. So, flip backwards and forwards to look at the different sections in a number of different steps to find your way around and to get a general impression, before you start to write things down.

Whenever you start using the material, it's useful to discuss where and how to begin with practitioners who know your child or young person. This helps you to use the opportunity to exchange information about what you've noticed your child doing.



### How often?

Most families say they like to fill in the Developmental Journal regularly, so they don't forget all the small things that show their child or young person has learnt something new. Doing this can also help to pick up any areas of difficulty that may be developing as early as possible. Some people like to just jot down things as they notice them or may come back to the Journal when they want to check or celebrate something.

You may also find that your use of the Journal changes over time. There are times when you may want to use it very often, because your child or young person seems to be changing a lot, or because there's some sort of crisis and it's helpful to observe more closely what they're doing. On the other hand, if there's a medical problem or something happening in your family that slows development down, it would be fine if you decide to put the Journal away for a bit and come back to it later.



## Using the Journal with other people – one set of materials for everyone to use

The Journal is most useful when you talk about it with other people, for example with other family members and practitioners. The material is particularly useful when many different people are trying to help with different aspects of a child or young person's health and development, as it provides one set of information that can be shared and used by everyone involved. The Journal is best used as a core part of regular, on-going relationships between you and the people you meet with most often to discuss how best to help your child or young person. This can be particularly helpful to practitioners and yourself when reports have to be written.

Communication is important, and particularly so when lots of different people are involved with a child or young person, and families sometimes say they find the words used by practitioners working for different services confusing. The Journal encourages everyone involved with your child or young person to use the same language. It also promotes partnership working, by valuing what everyone knows about the child or young person, and keeps the family at the heart of discussion and decision-making.

The Journal can also help when you have many appointments to attend and children and young people have many assessment procedures to undergo. The fact that everything is written down and to hand can reduce stress. It also helps practitioners understand what your child or young person can already do, what they find difficult and how best to help. This may be particularly valuable when talking about your child or young person's situation is difficult. It may also be important at first meetings with new people and at times of transition – for example, when your child or young person moves to a new class or if you move house to a different area.



Many assessments can take place in the school years, both inside and outside of school. The Journal provides information that informs, supplements and enriches the results of more formal assessments undertaken by practitioners in clinical or classroom settings. If you have concerns about the results of assessments or how they match up with what you know your child or young person can do, the Journal can help everyone to have a clearer picture of your child or young person's capabilities in everyday life.

If your child or young person has particular learning needs, it's important that everyone works in partnership to provide support. The Journal can inform early discussions about what will be needed to include your child or young person in school and how best to encourage development and participation.

There is more information in Appendix 1 'Using the School Years Developmental Journal in schools' about how the Journal can be used in practice and it can benefit schools.

## Individual children and rates and patterns of development

All children and young people show variation in their progress in different areas of development and it's normal for them to make faster progress in some areas than others. The way the Journal is organised helps you to see where this is the case and where your child or young person may need extra help.

The only risk associated with using the Journal is that you may focus too much on particular Developmental Steps or Areas of Development, rather than seeing your child or young person as a whole. It's important for everyone to keep reminding themselves about all the ways in which you and your child or young person are succeeding and developing, and to celebrate success and progress whenever and however it happens.

### Learning more than one language

If your child is learning more than one language, i.e. if they are bilingual or multilingual, you might like to have multiple copies of some pages, especially for 'Communication' and fill this in for each language your child is exposed to. Alternatively you could use different colour pens on the same sheet. You may also want to make additional notes, such as the extent of their communication levels in each and any preferences they may show.

If you use a different language at home to the English which is used in your child's school or other learning setting, you might like to ask your child or young person's keyworker, teacher, teaching assistant or other practitioner for help with completing the Developmental Journal for your child's English language ability. You may also like to work together in using the Journal to recognise the importance of the home or community languages your child or young person may speak.



### Sensory and physical impairments

Your child or young person may have a physical impairment or a sensory impairment, such as deafness or a vision impairment, which means that some of the items in the School Years Developmental Journal may not be suitable for them. You can change these items so they become appropriate for your child or young person – you might like to do this with a practitioner. You may also choose to miss some items out. This Journal is for you to use in the way that is most helpful for you.

At the end of this How to Use guide there are two appendices, which contain information and additional guidance about how you might use the Journal with children and young people with vision or hearing impairments, and common issues associated with these impairments.

### What to do when progress seems to get stuck

Sometimes it may seem that your child or young person is not moving to the next Developmental Step in one or more area. If this is the case, there are several things that you could do:

- talk to a practitioner to find out what they think
- think about backing off from a particular activity for a while. Your child or young person may simply have become bored or their interests may have changed
- choose a different area from the four Areas of Development to concentrate on
- think about what is happening around your child. Have there been changes in their environment?

## Summary

### **In summary, the Journal can help you:**

- notice more about your child or young person
- understand the importance of what your child or young person is doing as they learn new things
- share what you know about your child or young person
- understand what practitioners may be looking for and how they think about development
- ask questions
- know what to expect next
- discuss how things are going and agree what to do next to help your child or young person.

### **It can help practitioners:**

- work in partnership with you and with each other
- communicate more effectively
- build up a more accurate picture of what your child or young person is able to do and therefore give better advice
- discuss and agree shared goals so that everyone working with your child or young person is focused on the same development priorities
- identify important issues early.



## Appendix 1: Using the School Years Developmental Journal in schools

The School Years Developmental Journal helps parents to:

- record and celebrate change and new achievements for their child or young person
- understand the significance of what their child or young person is doing now, what they are likely to do next and how they can be helped to move on
- build up a record of the nature and sequence of development that can be shared with other people
- recognise the value of all new learning – particularly when it may seem that very little is happening

The School Years Developmental Journal follows on from the Early Years Developmental Journal and provides a continuum of developmental markers through to the end of Key Stage 5. It helps parents to identify where their child or young person is in relation to key developmental indicators and supports them in gathering evidence for this developmental profiling. Importantly, the Developmental Journal also signposts next steps in identifying the kind of progress their child or young person may make.

## How to Use the School Years Developmental Journal

The Journal consists of five Developmental Steps, which are mapped to Key Stages 1-5. This provides a helpful focus for both parents and teachers in understanding the alignment of progress across the developmental continuum and the curriculum. The Developmental Steps are organised within the four areas of the School Years Developmental Journal:

- personal, social and emotional
- communication
- physical
- thinking

Sharing information with other key people, particularly with teachers, is vital in overcoming feelings of isolation for parents of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Using the Developmental Journal empowers parents and adds a real sense of purpose to how they can contribute along with key practitioners in helping their child or young person to lead an ordinary life.

### How can schools benefit?

*"We were struggling as to how our usual assessment model would help in this child's case, we needed to show the small steps of progress and be reflective about what has been achieved and plan the next steps and this [the Developmental Journal] has enabled us to do that"*

Quote from a school working with Achievement for All 3As and Early Support

The School Years Developmental Journal has been designed to support teachers and schools in meeting the needs of individual children, young people and their families, along with meeting the requirements of special educational needs and disability policy guidelines and OFSTED.



The use of the Journal is likely to powerfully augment the progress of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities by:

- identifying early those children and young people who need additional support so that the best outcomes can be planned for them
- enabling greater understanding of the child or young person's progress, by drawing on the experience of the family
- providing an evidence base for a shared understanding between families and teachers about where a child or young person is in relation to progress in learning at school, the potential barriers to progress and what the parent and teacher can do to help the child or young person make further progress
- helping practitioners to set agreed appropriate and meaningful targets for further progress with the family and child or young person, especially where individual or structured learning plans are used by schools in targeting areas of progress and intervention

A key benefit of using the School Years Developmental Journal is in supporting communication between families and practitioners. Use of the Journal can encourage the use of shared and accessible language and therefore help parents to come to a deeper understanding of what progress their child or young person is making through their learning in school. The Journal is a useful tool for supporting dialogue between parents and teachers – for example, when performance reviews are held. If schools are involved in Achievement for All 3As, use of the Journal can inform and enrich “Structured Conversations” by demonstrating progress, including in literacy and numeracy, enhancing pupil voice opportunities and supporting information sharing and understanding among children/young people, families, schools and wider agencies.



The School Years Developmental Journal, particularly when embedded in a wider Early Support context, can help schools to meet the requirements of OFSTED. Effective use of the Journal allows schools to demonstrate how they work in partnership with parents by communicating with them on a regular basis, sharing information and engaging them in decisions about how best to support their child or young person. Furthermore, the Journal can inform planning, assessment and monitoring of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities, which can provide important evidence about how the school demonstrates its knowledge of what works well in securing progress.

### What schools can do to help families

Families will come to using the School Years Developmental Journal from different starting points. Some parents will be familiar with Developmental Journals as a means of tracking development at the pre-school and reception year phase, while other parents will begin to use the Journals later in their child or young person's schooling. Generally, the earlier the School Years Developmental Journal is used the better, in terms of supporting the development of children and young people.

Schools can become significant partners with parents who have a child or young person with a special educational need or disability by bringing the School Years Developmental Journal to their attention and the attention of other practitioners and encouraging the use of the Journal to inform, supplement and enrich more formal assessments in a range of multi-agency contexts.

Within the school community, it may be that more than one parent uses the School Years Developmental Journal to support their understanding of their child or young person's progress and how to promote this. Where this is the case, schools can have an important role by establishing a support network for parents who already use the Journal as well as parents new to using the Journal. By



encouraging networking among parents, schools can then link use of the Journal to training opportunities for parents - for example, regarding improving a child or young person's communication skills both at home and school. This can also be linked to specific interventions that the school uses and then used as an opportunity to share the details of these with parents – for example, a language development programme.

### Considerations when using the Journal in schools

Schools will need to decide how the use of the School Years Developmental Journal can be encouraged and supported, and also how it can inform teachers' planning for progress. This might be the role of the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, a dedicated key teacher or specialist teaching assistant. In secondary schools, the information provided by the Journal will need to be distributed to all subject specialist teachers and schools will need to carefully consider how the information can be shared and also how feedback can be provided to support the dialogue between families and school staff.

Use of the information provided by the Journal will be of particular significance around key transitions, both within and between schools. It will be important for schools to be informed when the Journal is being used with a child or young person so that the evidence of their personal development and progress can be used to ensure the most smooth and seamless transition to a new phase of learning as possible.

## Appendix 2: Using the School Years Developmental Journal with deaf children and young people: A parent and practitioner guide

### Overview

This guide has been produced to help you to complete the School Years Developmental Journal for children and young people who are deaf. The term “deaf” means a permanent hearing loss, which requires the individual to use some sort of hearing technology.

This guidance has been written for parents and mainstream teachers, but teachers of the deaf and other practitioners may find it useful too. Early Support has produced a wide range of resources, including further information on deafness, which you may find useful [www.ncb.org.uk/early-support/resources/new-information-resources](http://www.ncb.org.uk/early-support/resources/new-information-resources).

We know that with appropriate support, deaf children and young people can communicate and learn alongside their hearing peers and so the Developmental Steps described in the Journal can be applied to deaf children and young people. However, we also know that deaf children and young people need their parents and teachers to understand the challenges they face when it comes to learning and communicating. Some of these challenges can be easily overcome, whilst others may need more thought, planning and resources. All challenges however, whether big or small, need to be managed to ensure that deaf children and young people reach their full potential and move through the Steps described in the Journal in the same way as their hearing peers.



In the following text, some of the most common challenges affecting deaf children and young people are described, along with some possible solutions to help you to overcome them. These will be grouped into four categories:

- using hearing technologies
- social and emotional development
- learning
- language and literacy

More specific advice around issues for individual children and young people should be directed to supporting practitioners, such as their teacher of the deaf.

### Using hearing technologies

There are a range of hearing technologies available such as hearing aids, bone anchored hearing aids and cochlear implants. The type of technology a deaf child or young person uses will depend on the type and level of their hearing loss, and some people may use technology in both ears, whilst others only use it in one. The aim of all hearing technology is to hear speech, so, with well fitted and consistent use, children and young people will be able to hear and listen.

### **Deaf children and young people may find it hard to listen over a distance**

- try and stand or sit as close to the child or young person as possible
- think about where the child or young person is sitting – for example, in class they may find it easier to listen if they are closer to the front, but remember they need to be able to see their class mates as well as their teachers
- sound sources, especially voices, need to be as close as possible so microphones in hearing technology can pick up the sound
- make use of assistive devices that use remote microphone

systems, like radio aids, as much as possible during teaching. These devices send the signal directly from the speaker to the child or young person's hearing technology, to counteract the effects of distance

### **Deaf children and young people may find it harder to listen and learn in groups**

- encourage peers in class or group settings to be deaf aware. Establish ground rules with the group so everyone knows who is talking and how the discussion will work. Take turns in talking and use assistive devices such as radio aids where the microphone can be passed around the group
- cue the child or young person into learning by providing information before the lesson starts and recap at the end
- arrange the seating carefully so the child or young person can see everyone in the group
- manage noise levels in the room in general

### **Deaf children and young people may struggle to listen in background noise**

- spend some time working out where background noises come from, especially in the classroom, and think about how to prevent or reduce the noise
- soften off hard surfaces by using carpets, curtain and other wall coverings. This can help reduce both noise and reverberation
- add rubber tips to chairs and tables
- switch off electrical equipment such as computers and projectors when you're not using them
- encourage other children and young people to work quietly in the classroom
- wait for the class or group to be quiet before speaking or giving instructions



### **Hearing technologies can break down!**

- make sure you have spare batteries available should they be needed
- have a trouble shooting pack for the child or young person, with a simple guide for trouble shooting the equipment and phone numbers to call if there's a problem
- do a listening check each day to check the equipment- ask a teacher of the deaf how to do this
- encourage the child or young person to take responsibility for their own equipment

### **Social and emotional development**

All children and young people learn best when they placed in a positive learning and social environment. Deaf children and young people may become frustrated when they are not able to hear and communicate and when they do not understand what is happening around them. This can have an effect on their confidence, self esteem and sometimes, their behaviour.

### **Deaf children and young people may need help to develop their confidence and self esteem**

- use descriptive praise so that the child or young person understands their own strengths and achievements
- praise the child or young person when they ask for help and clarification
- ensure that all disabilities including deafness are covered in the curriculum

### **Deaf children and young people may need help to develop age-appropriate social skills**

- provide lots of opportunities for small group work
- provide chances to participate in events outside school
- provide opportunities to participate in group games and music
- make sure that friends and classmates are deaf aware and know how to communicate with the deaf child or young person. If they use British Sign Language (BSL) or signs to support their English, it may be a possibility to run signing classes in school for their hearing friends

### **Learning**

All children and young people are different and have their own personality, preferences and learning style, and this is true of deaf children and young people too. It's important that deaf children and young people have the right support to benefit from the same opportunities as other children and thrive in educational settings.

### **Deaf children and young people may have different learning styles to their hearing peers**

- use as many different multisensory methods as possible to get across new ideas and concepts
- make sure the child or young person has additional time to ensure they have grasped new ideas



**Deaf children and young people may need extra help with memory tasks**

- younger children may enjoy playing memory games such as picture matching or 'pairs', and 'Kim's game' to develop their working memory. Older children and young people may need information to be delivered in more manageable chunks and may need more time to process information
- phonological awareness training using particular strategies developed for deaf children can be helpful; consult a teacher of the deaf about these.
- learning rhymes and listening and retelling stories can help younger children to develop their memory

**Deaf children and young people may find it harder to attend and concentrate and they may get tired more easily**

- using hearing technologies effectively, including assistive devices such as radio aids, makes listening easier.
- make sure the listening environment is quiet and calm
- try to slow down the speed of the conversations or teaching sessions, to give the child or young person the time they need
- use visual aids to support teaching and learning
- ensure the child or young person has the opportunity to learn relevant new vocabulary or language before the lesson or learning session
- give children and young people time to relax and recharge - listening and learning can be hard work



### Language and literacy

New hearing technologies, early identification and better support mean that for many deaf children, young people and their families, communication is happening more naturally and easily than ever before. However, within the population of deaf children and young people there is almost more diversity now when it comes to communication. Some deaf children and young people can communicate using fluent spoken language, others use BSL, or rely on sign support, and there are still a significant group who struggle to develop their communication skills and may have additional difficulties as well as their deafness. For those who use BSL to communicate and learn, communication support workers and teachers of the deaf should be consulted when completing the Developmental Journal, so they can help you to decide if the step has been achieved in the child or young person's preferred language.

**Deaf children and young people may have slower language development, both spoken and written, with a reduced vocabulary size and poorer understanding of words and concepts.**

- get to know the child or young person's strengths and weaknesses in communication by talking to the practitioners who support them, such as their teacher of the deaf or speech and language therapist. Their assessment findings will help you to adapt the school curriculum to meet their language needs
- create a good listening environment
- provide varied opportunities for language learning, in small groups and in 1 to 1 sessions if necessary
- parents and practitioners should work together at home and school around language and communication
- provide the child or young person with pre and post learning sessions when introducing new or complex topics



**Deaf children and young people may need support to develop their literacy and grammatical skills**

- ask your teacher of the deaf about specific programmes or resources to help deaf children and young people in the area of literacy
- use visual cues to support literacy and grammatical skills
- provide the child or young person with small group or 1 to 1 sessions to help their literacy

**Deaf children and young people may find it difficult to learn language incidentally and may struggle to pick up on what others are saying**

- ensure that peers are deaf aware and know the child or young person's particular communication needs
- create opportunities for listening in 1 to 1 and small group work in good listening conditions
- create opportunities for participating in outside school activities
- prepare the child or young person with vocabulary and language before a learning session, as this may help them to "tune in"

## Appendix 3: Using the School Years Developmental Journal with children and young people with vision impairment: A parent and practitioner guide

### Overview

This guide has been produced to help you to complete the School Years Developmental Journal for children and young people who have vision impairment. The term “vision impairment” means a loss of vision which cannot be corrected with glasses. The term covers conditions which cause relatively minor visual loss through to those which result in an individual having no vision at all, which is very rare. Vision impairment can affect different children and young people in different ways.

This guidance has been written for parents and mainstream teachers, but qualified teachers of children and young people with vision impairment (QTVI) and other practitioners may find it useful too. Early Support has produced a wide range of resources, including further information on vision impairment, which you may find useful [www.ncb.org.uk/early-support/resources/new-information-resources](http://www.ncb.org.uk/early-support/resources/new-information-resources).

We know that, with appropriate support, children and young people with vision impairment can reach most of the same developmental milestones as their fully sighted peers and so most of the Developmental Steps described in the Journal can be applied to them.



However, we also know that for many children and young people with vision impairment, progress may be at a slower rate than for children and young people without a vision impairment, and they may need to practise much more to master a skill. They may also need to receive specialist support.

In the following text, some of the common challenges affecting children and young people with vision impairment are described, along with some possible solutions to help you to overcome them. These will be grouped into six categories:

- movement and mobility
- independence in self-care
- communication
- play and learning
- social and emotional development
- access to the written word and wider school curriculum

More specific advice around issues for individual children and young people should be directed to supporting practitioners, such as their QTVI.

### Movement and mobility

In order to move around their environment safely and confidently, first of all children need to understand how their own bodies work and move, so they can then be introduced to their environment, starting from their own homes and then moving into the wider world. Initially, fully sighted children are much more motivated to move because they have seen toys and objects that they want. This is much more challenging for a child with vision impairment so they may be less motivated to move. Teaching your child to be confident to move around independently is sometimes very stressful for a parent or carer but it is important to allow them to explore (at an appropriate level), and make their own mistakes.

**Children and young people with vision impairment may sometimes find it difficult to find their way around their environment**

- keep furniture in the same place to help children and young people build up a 'mental map' of their home and classroom
- use sensory clues to indicate different rooms as this can help children and young people to find their way around – for example, windchimes, scented candles, something interesting to touch on the door at their height,
- give verbal or sound clues to help them to find their way to you, starting from very close and then moving a little further away. This helps the child or young person to improve listening skills when moving, and they can then go on to develop 'echolocation' skills



### Independence and self-care

Self-care skills may need to be taught as children or young people with vision impairment often miss out on 'incidental learning', i.e., learning how to do things because they have seen it being done by someone else many times.

#### **Children and young people with vision impairment may find dressing/undressing difficult**

- place clothes where the child or young person can find them again
- use hand over hand guidance when the child or young person is learning a new skill – for example, fastening buttons, using a tie
- allow plenty of time to complete a task

#### **Children and young people with vision impairment may find feeding themselves difficult**

- tell the child or young people what is on the plate and where each item is
- provide opportunities for children and young people with vision impairment to play an active part in their daily routines in order to move towards appropriate independence

### Communication

For children and young people with vision impairment, their other sensory skills are key for understanding spoken language when describing objects, concepts and experiences.

#### **Children and young people with vision impairment may need support when exploring objects**

- introduce children and young people to as many real objects and real life experiences as possible, so that they can experience these first-hand rather than having them described
- make sure the child or young person has plenty of time to explore objects and make sense of what they are experiencing

#### **Children and young people with vision impairment may need additional spoken input during interactions**

- say the child or young person's name first so they know they are part of the interaction and can concentrate fully on what you are saying to them
- talk about what is happening to encourage their curiosity
- feed back about what the child or young person is doing; tell them you are watching and give praise and encouragement through speech



## Play and learning

Children with vision impairment need to play, like all other children. However, because they do not see how other children are playing with toys, there are some skills that need to be encouraged or taught rather than leaving them to find out for themselves.

### **Children and young people with vision impairment may need support and encouragement with playing games**

- encourage children and young people to play age-appropriate games such as dominoes and board games
- consider using games that have been adapted for those with vision impairment

### **Children and young people with vision impairment may get tired more easily**

- give children and young people plenty of time to relax and recharge during the day
- ensure children and young people have enough sleep as the demands of school and other activities can be very tiring and lack of sleep can affect motivation



### Social and emotional development

Understanding who they are and what they can achieve, mixing with adults and other children, initiating play and developing friendships may be more of a challenge for a child or young person with vision impairment. Eye contact, gestures and body language, which are often taken for granted by fully sighted people, can all go unnoticed or can be misinterpreted.

#### **Children and young people with vision impairment may need support to develop age-appropriate social skills**

- provide opportunities to participate in events outside school
- explain social skills that may be difficult for the child or young person to grasp – for example, that when speaking and listening to others, the child or young person should turn to face them

#### **Children and young people with vision impairment may need support in developing friendships and other relationships**

- school staff can help hugely in teaching children and young people about building friendships. Interactions in class and in the playground should be encouraged and can be closely structured at first until the child or young person is confident
- explain to the child or young person about their vision impairment and make sure that friends and classmates are also aware and understand their communication needs
- if the child or young person is in a mainstream class, they may enjoy meeting other children and young people with vision impairment as it offers opportunities to see that they are not alone and to talk to others who face similar challenges



### **Access to the written word and wider school curriculum**

Often in school, learning involves reading and writing. This is an area where children and young people with vision impairment may need support, depending on the extent of their difficulties. The text in books can be modified and such books are commercially available. Technology can also support children and young people's access to the curriculum as many different computer programmes and equipment are available. A QTVI will be able to offer support and advice about what may be most suitable for your child or young person.

#### **Children and young people with vision impairment may not be able to see standard print in books**

- encourage a love of stories and read to your child. If they cannot see pictures, they might like to hold tactile objects related to the story
- provide adapted books and worksheets – for example, in larger sized print or Braille
- discuss the use of a low vision aid with a QTVI
- consider the use of different technologies – for example, speech output on a computer

#### **Children and young people with vision impairment may need support in writing activities**

- provide simple pieces of equipment that encourage independent access to writing activities – for example, dark lined books, thick black felt pens, tactile rulers and maths equipment
- consider teaching touch-typing

## Feedback on the School Years Developmental Journal

My name and contact details (leave blank if you wish):

I am a:

☐ a parent/carer

☐ a practitioner (role: \_\_\_\_\_)

The basis of my experience with the journal is:

The most positive aspect(s) of the journal:

The most negative aspect(s) of the journal:

The amount of content in the journal is:

- ☐ too much                      comment:
- ☐ about right
- ☐ too little

The guidance on using the journal is:

- ☐ very useful                      comment:
- ☐ of some value
- ☐ insufficient

The amount of detail in the journal is:

- ☐ too much                      comment:
- ☐ about right
- ☐ too little

The language level of the journal is:

- ☐ too high                      comment:
- ☐ difficult in places
- ☐ accessible to most

The amount of help that I/the parents I support need in using the journal is:

- ☐ a lot                      comment:
- ☐ moderate
- ☐ very little

## How to Use the School Years Developmental Journal

How useful is the journal for enhancing communication among the team around the child:

- ☐ very useful                      comment:
- ☐ moderately useful
- ☐ not very useful

How fully do I/the parents I support complete the journal:

- ☐ much or all                      comment:
- ☐ about half
- ☐ just a few parts

How regularly do I/parents I support make entries in the journal:

- ☐ often                      comment:
- ☐ variably
- ☐ occasionally

Using this in a web or app based format would be:

- ☐ an improvement                      comment:
- ☐ acceptable
- ☐ problematic

What improvements do you think should be made:

Thank you for taking the time to give us your views. Please return this feedback sheet to:

Developmental-Journal@open.ac.uk  
FELS ChDL, Briggs Building Level 2, The Open University,  
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA

# Acknowledgements

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The Open University and Visiting Professor at the  
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group, LGBT focus group, Religion  
and Belief focus group, Mixed Ethnic  
focus group

The Open University

The Ear Foundation

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for children, young people and families



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